

Full length Research Paper

Identify Strategic Gender needs of Women Land Use Administration in Sodo Zuria Woreda Woliata Zone Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study was undertaken at Sodo Zuria Woreda to identify the strategic needs of women in land use administration to know the status of both rural and urban women in access to and control over land in the current land administration system in Sodo Zuria Woreda. The south nations, nationalities people's Regional State rural land administration and use proclamation and its implementation procedure were examined from a gender perspective in terms of ensuring women's land holding rights and control they have over land. Land remained under men's control throughout history and men's control over land was strengthened by the rural land reform carried out by the local leaders. The research applied both quantitative and qualitative methods in view of using secondary and primary data. Women's control over land is not efficiently practiced by the woreda agricultural and natural resources development office. There is a significant practical drawback as women's equal rights on land could not be achieved without gaining control over land. Study findings indicate absence of autonomous institution as gap in addressing women's issues in the land administration system. This study forwards recommendation to address gender gaps identified to ensure women's equal access to and control over land in the study area.

Key words: Gender, Land use, strategic needs

Introduction

Strategic gender needs, are those needs identified by women that require strategies for challenging male dominance and privilege. These needs may relate to inequalities in the gender division of labor, in ownership and control of resources, in participation in decision-making, or to experiences of domestic and other sexual violence. These needs are often seen as feminist in nature as they seek to change women's status and position in society in relation to men. As such, they are more likely to be resisted than practical gender needs (Moyo, 2008). Strategic gender interests are derived in the first instance deductively, that is, from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist. These ethical and theoretical criteria assist in the formulation of strategic objectives to overcome women's subordination, such as the abolition of the sexual division of labor, the alleviation of the burden of domestic labor and childcare, the attainment of political equality, the establishment of freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women. Unlike men's production and productivity (registered in national accounts and planned for in allocations of resources for increasing productivity) which have market exchange value, women's production is almost exclusively for long term family consumption use value (FAO, 2009).

As everybody knows that women's access to and control over land is very critical as land is a strategic gender need major resource in women's livelihood for production and to live. However, women are discriminated against in terms of realizing their rights to land. Over the past three decades women's issues and more recently gender issues have gained prominence on the development platform (NAP-GE, 2006).

Land policies have been issued at federal and regional levels consistent to the constitution. The Ethiopian people revolutionary democratic front(EPRDF) rural land administration and use proclamation first issued in 1997 and revised in 2005 offer mandate to regional governments to issue land policies based on the federal rural land administration and use proclamation and consistent to region specific socio-economic situations (EPRDF, 2005).

The main Problems for this study Women's land right issue has become more critical in developing countries like in Ethiopia as land is a strategic gender need and major resource for survival to the majority of the people. Access to and control over land and its

products are critical to women, because women are responsible to ensure household food security by their community assigned gender roles. Rural land administration regulation is issued by Proclamation No. 39/2003 to give directives on detail implementation of the policy (EPRDF, 2005). A new land use administration system has been introduced and land administration programme is being implemented throughout the region. The rural land policy provides equal landholding rights to men and women. However, effectiveness of the rural land policy in addressing rural women's specific issues and challenge existing gender disparities in access to and control over land needs to be examined from a gender need perspective (MoFED, 2006).

Traditionally rights to property pass through the male line in woliata. This implies that women's status is generally inferior to that of men. Different researches carried out on rural land policy implementation revealed that policies favoring women's equal landholding rights didn't bring required changes at community level (Sida, 2005). Therefore, this study will identify challenges in underlying land administration as one of strategic gender needs in socio-economic issues. The overall objective of this study is to assess the challenges in strategic gender needs in relation to land use and administration policy implementation with respect to women's equal access to and control over land in the study area. Specifically to examine the fulfillments of strategic gender needs of land use policy implementation status in terms of women's access to and control over land; Identify and suggest ways of improving the performance of women's land use and administration in the area.

Materials and Method

Description of the Study Area

Sodo Zuria Woreda is one of the twelve Woredas in Wolayita zone found in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). The Woreda is bordered on the south by Humbo Woreda, on the west by the Omo River on which Gibe-3 hydroelectric power station was built which again separates it from Dawro Zone, on the north, northwest & northeast by Kembata Tembaro like Kacha Bira, on the east by the Damot Woyede, and on the south east by Areka town. The administrative center of Sodo Zuria Woreda is Sodo City.

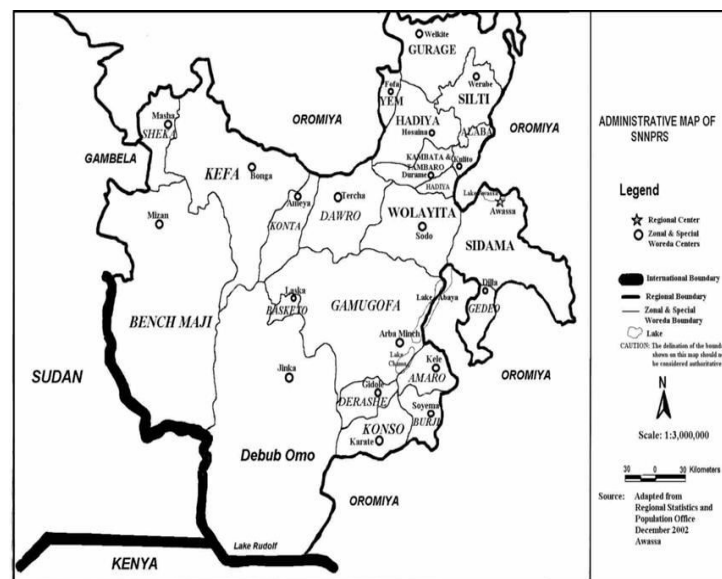


Fig 1. Map of the study area (Source: <http://www.ochaeth.org/Archive/DownloadableReports/resettlementSNNPR0603.pdf>)

Based on 2016 sample survey data the Woreda has a total population of 510,000 averagely. The total area of Sodo Zuria is 351.86 square kilometers. A total of 77,743 households were counted in this Woreda, which resulted in an average of 6.56 persons to a household (WFED, 2017). Sodo Zuria lies approximately 330 km south of Addis Ababa along the main highway that leads to Arba-Minch via Hossana. The study area is one of economically significant areas of Woliata Zone. Since the administrative center of Sodo Zuria (Sodo city) is serving as a junction point of seven major roads networking with Wolayita Sodo city to Dawuro, Sidama through Boricha, Hadiya Hosana, Shashemene, Sawula Gofa, Arba-Minch and Addis Ababa, so that it is one of the centre of business at the regional level.

Data Collection Methods

The major sources of data were secondary sources documents and primary source semi-structured interview. It was collected through reviewing and analyzing the existing documents unpublished. The major reasons for relying upon secondary types of data were to make easy the whole research.

Sampling Technique

The technique was used intentionally referring secondary data in the office and interviewed those experts who are currently working in the land use administration core process in order to get detail key information on the challenges of gender needs in land use administration process. The main reasons for relying on secondary documents, reports and interview were to minimize the biasness on the study issues.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis was both quantitatively and qualitatively with the purpose of describing numerical evidences in the study. It was also examined current status of strategic gender need in respect to land use administration. The data analysis process was also made by making use of table and brief discussion qualitatively.

Result and Discussion

The qualitative data taken from the woreda office indicated that issue of both urban and rural land has been primarily a political and social question in previous and in contemporary Woliata people in the study area. Especially rural land has been center of focus and land tenure system has a long history in the Sodo Zuria woreda. Post 1991 land policy is framed in the constitution in the current government. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) rural land policy grants women equal rights on land as women have constitutional right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. Women are particularly provided equal rights with men in respect to use, transfer, administer and control of land and to inherit land. Rural land policy issues still continue to be agenda of scholarly debates in view of its impacts on rural livelihoods, the rural economy and that of the study area as a whole. Moreover, women's land rights issue is becoming an aspect of rural land policy in the study area.

Land registration

As the data collected from woreda office the current land administration system is based on land administration and use proclamations issued by woreda agricultural and natural resource development office have right to provide land registration certificate. The land registration process includes land measurement, boundary setting, collecting information on different parcels under individual holdings, etc and data are kept in official records. Land holders are issued with a certificate or book of holdings carrying information about the landholder and landholdings registered under his/her name. Accordingly, rural land was measured, registered and land holding certificate was provided to users/holders in the study area. Rural landholding certificate would contain information on land size, land use type and cover, level of fertility and borders. Rural land use has no time limit and farmers (both men and women) are provided rights to inherit rural land use right to family member in the study area.

Challenges in Women's Land Use and Administration

As the data taken from woreda experts indicated that women's right to land is affected by land scarcity and different cultural attitude. Women are marginalized from accessing land whenever land is scarce. Rural women do not have equitable access to land and agricultural resources in the study area. They have low involvement in all development activities and have low decision-making power. Women's labor contribution to the agricultural sector is invisible because of the gender division of labor in communities in the study area. The ox-plough farming system and cultural taboos on women ploughing and sowing had affected women's right on land particularly that of family households. As south nations, nationalities people's region family laws are particularly important since control of marital property and equal share in divorce, is the main area where women are mostly encouraged with regards to their rights to land.

As articulated by interviewees, women's secondary status, lower socialization, undervalued productive work, and illiteracy in the study area often make them reluctant to claim legal rights. In addition, women incur significant social costs for going against cultural norms; these costs include social ridicule and the possible loss of social benefits. In some cases a backlash of domestic violence occurs against women who claim their land rights. The extended patriarchal family generally provides a structure for the lifelong basic welfare of all family members and for assistance in times of social or economic crisis. This is particularly significant for resource-poor rural women with young children in the study area.

As observed in Sodo zuria woreda documents, daughters do not inherit any land; in spite of EPRDF land policy entitle them to inherit some family land. Daughters concede their rights to brothers to avoid conflict and maintain support from the extended family. Wives and daughters may not insist on having their names included on the title to household land because of potential conflicts with husbands or their family in the study area. In Sodo Zuria woreda, few women are aware of whose name is on the land title and do not request that joint titles be issued. Moreover, even when women have rights under the law, such as inheritance rights, women may not claim the rights because of their preferences to have long-term social support from brothers and other family members rather than secure an asset that may not provide long-term economic security in the study area.

As indicated in the interview women themselves may be reluctant to become publicly involved in political activities and community organizations for several reasons: inexperience in public speaking and participation, a lack of basic education and knowledge about how social and legal matters function, and domestic responsibilities that no one else will assume. Other more structural constraints include women's low literacy and lack of skills in the dominant local language (Wolitegna) in Sodo Zuria woreda was critical challenges.

The Land Administration System

As land administration system of the study area indicated from the report land distributed to a married couple is registered in the names of the husband who is to be the head of household. Taxes levied on all distributed land are paid in the names of the head of the household. However, given the considerable politicization and awareness raised in the course of the democratization, the fact that household heads are men does not mean that the male spouse has the upper hand nor is the decision-maker.

Ways of Improving the Status of Land Use and Administration Capacity of Women

As indicated from the woreda experts facilitating conducive conditions to the speeding of equality between men and women so that women can administer land and ensuring that women's right to own property like land as well as their other human rights are respected. Facilitating the necessary conditions whereby rural women can have access to basic social services and to ways and means of lightening their work load could be considered as a solution. Eliminating step by step, prejudices as well as customary and other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy and enabling women to hold public office and to participate in the decision making process at all levels especially land use right and administration capacity in the study area.

As the annual reports of woreda agricultural and natural resources development office indicated that, women have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely elected representatives, the right to vote and to be elected to any level of government offices and to be a member of any political organization, labor union, trade organization or employers or professional association of their choice. As a result, the number of women in decision making and leadership roles has increased considerably both in rural and urban area so as the land use and administration of women become progressive in the study area.

As indicated in the table 1 the land holding by the male headed and female headed households is progressively increasing. During 2013 the number of certified female headed land owners 27,668 (31%) and 2014 it was 29,916(33.2%), 2015 the data shows 33,232(35.6%) of female headed households were owned land. Finally, land owned female was 46,603(39.1%). This shows that people in the area are changing the previous cultural challenges and practicing the equality of male and female in the study area.

Table. 1 Land holding females and male's data from Sodo Zuria woreda

Land holding	2013	2014	2015	2016
Male headed Households	59,890(69%)	60,195(60.8%)	60,118(64.4%)	72,588(60.9%)
Female headed Households	27,668(31%)	29,916(33.2%)	33,232(35.6%)	46,603(39.1%)
Total	87,558	90,111	93,350	119,191

Source: Compiled from the woreda agricultural and natural resource development office

Conclusion

Women's land rights issue has gained focus in the gender discourse and is considered as mechanism for enhancing women's empowerment at household and community levels in the study area. However, land tenure discourse is still lagging behind in ensuring women's access to and control over land. Above all women's equal access to and control over land enable them to gain higher status in households and in communities in the study area. In spite of substantial economic advancements and policy considerations in women's equal rights, their equal right to land is not ensured in most kebeles of Sodo Zuria woreda. Achievement is even less in ensuring women's control over land. Linkages between rural land policy and other laws such as family law that recognizes women's rights to own administer and control property in marriage and equal share at divorce is important to ensure women's equal rights on land. Therefore, linkages between rural land policy and relevant legislations strangeness and the laws would be promoted to ensure women's equal rights on access to and control over land in the study area.

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